# LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

## Easter Congress Signs

R. PALME DUTT

## Leonardo da Vinci

J. D. BERNAL, F.R.S.

## How We Began the Fight

EDDIE LLOYD

*Sec., Parc & Dare Lodge*

April, 1952

One shilling and sixpence

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# THE PATH OVER THE MOUNTAINS

WELSH miners have long memories. They have memories of playing their part forty years ago when, on the first of this month, the world's biggest strike of miners entered its fifth week. In 1912 one million British miners took industrial action to prevent their living conditions being cut back. The then Home Secretary in the Liberal Government—today's Conservative Prime Minister—has profound cause to remember the miners' action. So have the children and grandchildren of the men and women of Tonypandy, who had seen Churchill's police and troops turn the Valleys into an armed camp. Take only 20 years ago. I remember visiting Tonypandy, looking up from the slag-tip meeting ground at the sheep paths winding round the mountain, black with people coming over the top to the Clydach from other valleys. They were on their way to a 'demo' against the Cuts. Not Butler's war cuts, but Baldwin's war cuts—cuts in the relief of the unemployed to provide the sinews of a Tory war policy. There were leaders then who begged the unemployed miners to starve quietly inactive and leave it all to them. The unemployed sons of the 1912 strikers did not take that advice: they marched against the Cuts. The same fight but different times, Mr. Churchill: ask the women if the valleys today intend to wait inactive until the sons' sons must go on Hunger March to fight the Cuts. Yes, there are memories called up by the plain, blunt account of E. Lloyd, the Secretary of the Parc and Dare Lodge, of how today's fight against the cuts began. Only recently, renewing his subscription, a Welsh reader recalled those hungry 'Thirties, when he first began to read *Labour Monthly* in his Workingmen's Institute. Another veteran reader, a retired union official and 'socialist and trade unionist for over 44 years', draws on his memories for use today. He is 'convinced that the only hope for world peace is a return to the fundamental principles of socialism; exposure of the betrayal of the British Labour movement by the sycophantic surrender of the leaders to the Wall Street warmongers; and ending the filibustering expeditions in Korea and Malaya'.

A Canadian reader describes these wars as 'advance notice of what this atom bomb way of life has to offer humanity. And while in Russia there is ample grub for the workers, in Britain you have to sacrifice and starve. Wonderful thing this freedom to starve; I nearly died for it in 1914-18. Today the terrible danger of peace haunts Wall Street and its Pentagon. The hallmark of a solid citizen is to be a warmonger; their cold war staves off depression and their collapse'. Underlining this description of haunting fear in the U.S.A., a Middle Westerner, subscribes for five years, for 'we don't know from one day to the next when our jobs may disappear. I've a few extra dollars today, tomorrow there may be none—and who wants to be without *L.M.*? So take it now'. What a contrast to turn to a letter from a British reader in China, describing how she and Chinese friends appreciate *L.M.* 'Here the note is unity and strength, and you feel it all the more in contrast to Shanghai's imperialist past.' Obviously this same note was felt by a fellow reader in South East Midlands: 'After reading the article *Mother China* my wife and I put it to the test by getting eleven people in our street one after the other to read it. Without excep-

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## Notes of the Month

# *Easter Congress Signposts*

**The so-called split in the Parliamentary Labour Party is the inevitable outcome of divergences of view not only within the ranks of Labour Members of Parliament, but throughout the whole Labour movement. The Labour leadership long ago alienated the rank and file. But for the general election announcement just before the Labour Party annual conference was due to start, the rank and file of the Labour movement would have completely repudiated the leadership's rearmament policy.**

**'Railway Review', March 14, 1952.**

This Easter the various conferences of the trade union, Co-operative and political working class movement meet in the midst of a rising battle against the Tory policies of Rearmament and Ruin. These Easter conferences have always afforded a traditional pointer to new political trends. Last Easter they revealed a rising spirit of militancy on the home front, though still lagging on



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foreign policy and the then newly announced £4,700 million arms programme. This found further reflection at the Scottish Trades Union Congress, in the Ministerial resignations over the Gaitskell Budget, at the Blackpool Trades Union Congress, and in the agenda for Scarborough. Mr. Attlee's desperate device to counter the rising tide by calling a general election to hand over to Toryism interrupted, but did not remove, the challenge. On the contrary, the battle is resumed this year at a higher level, now against the Tory Government's war policy and economic offensive, expressed in the Butler Budget; against the practical surrender to these policies by the right wing leadership; and for a new policy of the Labour movement. All these questions find sharp reflection in the agenda of the conferences to be held this Easter. *The conflict of policy in the labour movement becomes increasingly open and inescapable at every level from top to bottom.* This battle is of decisive import for the future of the Labour movement, for the future of Britain and for the choice of war or peace. And it is this situation which gives additional significance to the Twenty-Second Congress of the Communist Party which will also be held this year at Easter, and which will set itself the task to show the path of advance for the united movement of struggle to defeat Toryism and win the way forward towards the aims of peace and socialism.

**Two Budgets**

It is impossible to examine the Tory Budget of Mr. Butler without contrasting with it another Budget introduced within a few days of it—the Socialist Budget of the Soviet Union. The Budget of Tory Britain was introduced on March 11. The Budget of the Socialist Soviet Union was introduced on March 6. Between them the contrast of two worlds is set out in the merciless language of facts. The Tory Budget had to review a year in which production had begun to fall, during the last quarter, *below* the level of the preceding year; in which unemployment and short time had begun to rise; in which the adverse balance of trade and deficit on the balance of payments soared to record heights during the second half of the year; and the country, according to the verdict of its own official spokesmen, was on the verge of bankruptcy. It had to review a year of rising prices and falling real wages, during which, according even to the highly inadequate and deceptive official statistics designed to conceal the full fall, retail prices had increased by 13 per cent and food prices by 18 per cent,



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against an increase of wage rates by 10 per cent, while profits had risen by 25 per cent. The Socialist Budget was able to review a year in which production had increased by 16 per cent, personal incomes of all office and manual workers and peasants had increased by 10 per cent, prices had been reduced all round, and retail sales of consumption goods had increased by 15 per cent (meat by 32 per cent, milk and dairy products by 35 per cent, sugar and tea by 29 per cent, cotton textiles by 18 per cent, furniture by 50 per cent). A sufficient contrast already between worsening and improvement; economy for war and economy for peace; economy for profit, and economy for use.

**Two Roads**

A visitor from Saturn might have imagined that the task of Mr. Butler in this disastrous situation would have been to find the means to raise the sinking conditions of the people, improve the development of productive resources, and cut down waste expenditure on destruction which was squandering the very intensified productive efforts of an under-nourished population.

The planetary visitor would have thereby shown his ignorance of the principles of 'sound finance'. In accordance with these principles, Mr. Butler set himself the task to worsen and lower still further the consumption of the people, to cut down relentlessly all productive development, to increase the return to the parasitic elements of the population, and to augment enormously the proportion of the nation's effort devoted to destruction. The Socialist Budget devoted its main resources, or two thirds of the whole, to social and economic development, and less than one fourth to defence; 180 billion roubles, or 38 per cent, to economic development, 124.8 billion, or 27 per cent, to social and cultural needs; and 113.8 billion, or 23.8 per cent, to defence (contrasting with 33 per cent in the last pre-war year—a diminution all the more striking in face of the openly offensive trebling of armaments expenditure within 12 months by the Atlantic Powers). The Tory Budget, on the other hand, made the principal item rearmament, totalling (including strategic reserves, civil defence, etc.) £1,602 million, or close on 40 per cent of the whole, as against £1,222 million for all social services; the addition of debt interest of £575 million would make the total for arms and war debt £2,177 million, or more than half the Budget. Here are two roads, not merely of theory, but of practice, with consequences writ large in the lives of every citizen of the two countries.



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**Class Offensive**

Mr. Butler's Budget represents a class offensive on the working population as direct and ruthless as the Churchill return to the gold standard and Baldwin's 'All wages must come down' in 1925. or the Baldwin-MacDonald retreat from the gold standard and offensive on unemployed pay in 1931. All the flimsy cover of very transparent deception and 'cleverness' has not succeeded in concealing the fact that its heaviest blows fall on the lowest incomes and its most bounteous gifts are poured out to the upper incomes. The worker earning up to £8 a week, i.e. the vast majority, with an average family of two children, gets no relief from income tax rebates, receives 3s. additional family allowance, pays—according to Mr. Butler's own calculation—6s. for food subsidy reductions (actually much more on the general rise of food prices and especially of unrationed foods), as well as 7½d. additional insurance contribution, the higher fares through the extra petrol tax, and all the other higher prices through the lifting of controls and utility protection. The same man, if he were a company director earning over £2,000 a year, would get a considerable net bonus through income tax reduction. Mr. Butler must have a very low opinion of the intelligence of the working class and of those with lower incomes if he imagines that this character of his budget is not visible. He has not increased the total of taxation in order to pay directly for the arms programme. Instead, he has redistributed the burden of taxation for the benefit of the wealthy at the expense of the poor in order to restrict consumption of the majority of the people to correspond to the shortage of goods consequent on the arms programme. This is called 'combatting the danger of inflation'. The shorter title is 'Guns, not Butter'.

**On the Warpath**

The full effects of the Butler offensive will only make themselves felt in successive stages during the coming months, as the direct increases in prices through lowered subsidies and the increase in import cuts to £600 million is reinforced by the consequences of the raising of bank rate to 4 per cent making itself felt throughout the economy, with accompanying rise of unemployment and short time. New wage demands of the miners, engineers and other sections are already announced to meet the rising burdens. At the same time the spokesmen of capital, their appetites whetted by the Tory Budget, are already clamouring



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for more. 'Is it enough?' demands the *Manchester Guardian* editorial. 'Mixed verdict' is the judgment of the *Economist,* which demands the extension of the offensive to the housing subsidies. The same demand is voiced by *The Times* (March 12):

> Everything that can be said about the food subsidies can be said with redoubled force of the housing subsidies . . . and with still greater force of the housing subventions through the system of rent restriction.

Mr. Gaitskell, speaking before the Budget, demanded 'more drastic action' from the Chancellor. The Liberal leader, Mr. Clement Davies, expressed the doubt 'whether the steps which have been taken by the Chancellor are drastic enough . . . if they are not he will have to come to the House to ask for even more drastic steps to be taken'. Thus the Class War Budget has set the scene for intensified class warfare. The working class is in no mood of defeat or impotence. All the sophistries of the right wing leaders arguing that it is 'constitutional' for the industrial workers to resist direct wage cuts, but 'unconstitutional' to resist wage cuts through budget impositions and price manipulations will not avail to damp down the movement in face of the imperative urgencies of the situation.

**Stabilisation Illusions**

Does the analogy of the Butler offensive with the offensives of 1925 and 1931 mean that the classic path here followed, to increase the return for the owners of capital and ruthlessly slash the standards of the people, will succeed once more to afford a temporary 'solution' for the nightmare problems of British capitalism? 1952 is no longer 1925 or 1931. The world situation of American aggressive dominance, rearmament frenzy and the drive to war, excludes the possibility of even temporary capitalist 'stabilisation' so long as these paths of destruction are followed. In the same week as the Budget was proclaimed to represent the stern path to financial and economic salvation, there came the new blow of the announcement of the Australian import cuts by £440 million, with the loss of £144 million exports for Britain, and the South African import cuts to 40 per cent of 1948 (an unrehearsed outcome of the Empire Finance Ministers' Conference in January, on which the President of the Board of Trade could only lamely explain that no such proposal had been discussed at the conference). The new costs imposed by the effects of the Budget and the raising of bank rate, as well as by the increased rearmament demands and the drastic cutting down of civilian construction



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investment and re-equipment, will further lower the level of all production other than armaments, weaken the export industries, at the same time as the consumption goods industries receive additional blows, extend unemployment and short time, and thus lead to general economic deterioration in place of improvement. The factor of the rearmament programme, which was not present in 1925 or 1931, governs 1952. The course indicated by the Butler Budget is either to major war within a short-term period or to heavy economic worsening along the present path of ruin.

**Truman Blows the Gaff**

Mr. Butler does not inform the British people that they must go short in order to maintain hundreds of thousands of soldiers overseas, invade other people's countries, bomb and burn their homes, and pile up limitless weapons of destruction for these wars and for still more grandiose aims of war on socialism. Instead, he speaks of the 'deficit of the balance of payments', and the 'running down of our reserves' and the 'danger of inflation', as if these were facts of nature like the weather, unconnected with government policy. But official expression outside Britain is less diplomatic. President Truman's broadcast of March 6 described the situation of the British people, as one might describe the situation of a starving nation of soldiers, in terms markedly different from Mr. Butler's Budget speech a few days later:

> Take the British. They are down to 16 cents (1s. 2d.) worth of meat a week. That makes a mighty small package when the butcher wraps it up. They would have more if it were not for their defence effort.

*'They would have more if it were not for their defence effort.'* Admirably said, President Truman. But it was not said in criticism. It was spoken as a kind of left-handed praise of a willing model satellite, who is prepared to spend £1,600 millions on armaments for the open American plans of aggressive war, and be humbly grateful for largesse of £214 million from their overlord and patron in return. Nor did President Truman add that the size of the arms programme was imposed and continuously raised by American dictation, at the same time as American trade bans successfully crippled Britain's trade and increased the dollar dependence.

**Insatiable Overlord**

But the American overlord is not satisfied. The demand is ceaseless for more and yet more. Senator Taft denounces Britain for resisting the extension of the war in the Far East:



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Britain's thinking on Korean policy is completely unreasonable. I think we have a right to insist on their co-operation.

Senator Connally, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on March 14 denounced the bill for 'military aid' to Britain and France as excessive:

If Britain and France cannot do something for themselves it is not our responsibility. The Prime Minister, when he came over here, said he was not coming to ask for aid. Did you run after him and give it to him?

The *New York Herald Tribune* complained that Britain was collapsing into 'isolationism' (i.e. insufficient docility to American war orders):

British isolationism has reached a new peak. . . . The British policy to which both parties subscribe is that the Korean war is a mistake. . . . It comes with ill grace from a man of the stature of former Prime Minister Attlee to say in the midst of debate that he believes the American people are in effect warmongers and that sentiment in the United States is eager for an all-out world war. There have even been intimations that the American Government has not been sincere in its conduct of the truce negotiations. Such comments from Moscow would not have been surprising.

(David Lawrence, Washington correspondent, *New York Herald Tribune*, February 12, 1952).

Even the worm turns. There is no love-match between Britain and America. The obsequious Mr. Attlee is accused of regarding the Americans as 'warmongers'. Truth will out.

**American Mother Land**

The slavedriver cracks his whip—but British resistance is indubitably rising, despite the fawning obedience of the Government of Sons of American Mothers ('He shared with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Crookshank one special advantage in the matter—they all had American mothers': Harold MacMillan in the House of Commons on February 26). Of course Simon Legree loves Uncle Tom: it is really a touching relationship, which only stony-hearted abolitionists would wish to break. Simon loves the quaint customs and habits of the natives, their beautiful landscape, their historic castles and treasures. He loves their beautiful landscape so much that he is ready to bulldoze it out of existence for airstrips; and he loves their ancient castles and treasures so much that he is ready to transfer them, stone by stone, or canvas by canvas, to his home address. He loves the old country dances of the peasantry so much that he is ready to re-export them back



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to Britain under the title 'American square dances', to be learned by the native youth as the 'latest American craze'.

**Yankee Babus**

He has even reached the stage of sophistication when he can laugh at the 'babu American' so painfully and vaingloriously displayed by zealous native aspirants. The New York weekly journal, the *New Republic*, records:

> Europe is gradually being reduced to a low colonial status vis-à-vis America, speaking a kind of babu American which is laughed at by those who know the real thing and yet is indulged in proudly by its practitioners as representing the new world, 'the wave of the future'.
>
> (*New Republic* article, reprinted in *Manchester Guardian*, March 12, 1952).

Shades of Kipling! The whirligig of time has taken its revenge. The 'haw haw' laugh of the British Nabob over his obsequious 'Bengali babu' retainer has indeed become transplanted. Like the former Eurasian 'loyalist' quislings under the old British Raj, the new Yankee babus sit on the Treasury Front Bench and boast of their American mothers. It remains for an American journalist to describe the 'bhandralog' of the Labour Party.

**Who Speaks for Britain?**

The inquiring student who desires to hear the voice of Britain will be well advised to turn aside from the Treasury Front Bench or the American-syndicated articles and strip-cartoons in the Fleet Street press, and to study the agenda of the Easter conferences of the working-class organisations. Here, the resolutions pour out in a flood on a wide variety of subjects from localities all over Britain and from men and women engaged in a diversity of trades and occupations, engaged in the struggle to earn their living and maintain their homes in present-day conditions, united only by the bonds of common organisation to protect and improve the conditions of life of themselves and their fellows. These resolutions are the unpaid product of local debate, each one (whatever its ultimate fate in the national conference) hammered out in discussion with no whips to control the outcome, whether in the backroom of a public house from some small branch organisation, or sponsored by some large organisation with hundreds of thousands of members like the London Co-operative Society, on the basis of debates and votes in a series of sectional meetings. It is impossible for any one with experience of the contents of the



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agenda of these conferences over a series of years not to discern a new note (already beginning to be visible in the agenda of the Scarborough Labour Party Conference last year) which reveals, not only the ferment of discussion in the working class, but the advance of new trends of policy, as a consequence of present conditions, in the articulate sections of the working class. These new trends find no reflection in the official voices of the B.B.C. or the mammoth press. But they are the signposts to the future thinking of millions of workers, and eventually of the nation.

**Towards New Horizons**

What is the new note? These resolutions were drawn up before the blows of the Budget. But already there is a spate of resolutions in every conference against the rearmament programme and its crippling effects on economic conditions, for the reduction of armaments, against the drive to war and the American impact on Britain, for negotiations of the Powers and a Five-Power Peace Pact, for the removal of trade bans and the development of East-West trade. There are no resolutions in favour of the Atlantic Pact or the war programme. Among the Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen, branches as far removed as Belfast and Acton and Nottingham call for peace negotiations, reduction of armaments and a Five-Power Peace Pact. The agenda of the Distributive Workers reveals seven resolutions on the cost of living; 17 on foreign policy and armaments, all calling for a reduction of armaments, peace negotiations or a Five-Power Peace Pact; five for the development of East-West trade; six on Germany and Japan; three on Korea; two against United States debased cultural infiltration. Among the Clerks and Administrative Workers a composite resolution, backed from London, Leeds, Liverpool and other centres, presents a comprehensive programme for the reduction of armaments, and for Five-Power agreement, for the unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons, for the removal of American bases from Britain, for democratic development and against militarisation in Germany and Japan, and for the removal of trade bans; and it is significant that the Executive Committee, by no means sympathetic to left-wing opinion, seeks to counter this progressive resolution by an amendment which is compelled to admit that 'the rearmament programme is crippling our economy and lowering our standards of life' and calls for 'a reduction of armaments of all nations' and 'the development of trade and economic relations with all countries'.



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## Co-operators for Peace

Especial interest attaches to the agenda of the Co-operative Party. *The Times* of March 12 ruefully commented:

> Formidable backing for a policy of opposition to the present scale of rearmament seems certain at the annual conference of the Co-operative Party to be held in Glasgow at Easter.

Resolutions from London, Leicester, Liverpool, Slough, Enfield Highway, Blackpool and Birkenhead all express this opposition in varying forms. The London Co-operative Society Political Committee declares itself 'opposed to the vast expenditure already entailed and envisaged by the rearmament programme', and adds that 'the distortion of the economy of the country caused by the use of capital and raw materials for rearmament will lower the standard of life'. Slough criticises the 'colossal amount' devoted to rearmament. Enfield Highway demands re-examination of the rearmament programme. Liverpool regrets that some members of the Parliamentary Labour Party find themselves committed to the rearmament programme and calls upon the National Committee and the parliamentary group to press for a policy in favour of a reduction in the rate of rearmament. Birkenhead and Watford call for peace negotiations for a Five-Power Peace Pact. Even more strongly the question of peace dominates the agenda of the Women's Co-operative Guild.

## Railwaymen's Voice for Peace

No less significant is the editorial article of the *Railway Review* of March 14, quoted in part at the head of these Notes. This article roundly affirms that 'the Labour leadership long ago alienated the rank and file', and buttresses its viewpoint with union decisions:

> We think we are justified in claiming that the rank and file of the Labour movement and the organisation to which we belong, the National Union of Railwaymen, have indicated very clearly where they stand in this controversy.

If a referendum were taken, the journal considers that 'there is absolutely no doubt' that 'the bulk of the Labour movement' would support the critics of the rearmament programme. The pertinent question is added:

> To whom do members of Parliament owe their first allegiance? To those who enabled them to get into the House of Commons, or to the leadership of the Labour Party, whose policy has been opposed? In the debate last week only one of our M.P.s, Mr. C. C. Poole, voted against the White Paper. . . .



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The issue is of such vital importance, and the views of our organisation have been expressed so unequivocally, that we believe there is justification for our questions.

Such questions are being pressed on many Labour M.P.s by their supporters, as feeling rises for a radical revision of policy.

**Cause and Effect**

It is this revolt *below* against the official policy of surrender to Toryism and the American war drive, this revolt increasingly manifest among the *basic local organisations* of the trade unions and Labour Party, and among the Co-operators, this revolt of the rank and file, inseparably bound up with increasingly militant *action* of the workers, demonstrations, marches, bombardment of parliamentary representatives and local councils, and token industrial actions (the distinction between different forms of action exists only in the minds of constitutional pedants and dogmatists on top, not of the workers)—it is this gathering ferment and revolt below which is the *driving force* to new shifts and alignments above, which stirs up the parliamentarians and gives boldness to timid legislators and opens their mouths, and which finally finds reflection in increasingly open controversies among the uppermost ranks of leadership.

**Personalised Politics**

The blinkered sensation-hunting press of the millionaires sees only the conflict of leaders above, the feud of factions for power, sees only Attlee, Bevan or 'the hand of Moscow'—and never the working class, which is always invisible in polite capitalist society except when its fist breaks through the trappings of Fleet Street's Iron Curtain. This is an old familiar story. It is only necessary to recall how the decisive political significance of the battle of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union against the Trotskyist degeneration of certain elements (one of the epic battles of socialism against capitalism, and of governing significance for the modern world) was completely concealed and caricatured by the official press of the West into a faction fight of two leaders for power—and is in practice still so presented, as in the recent exhumation by the B.B.C. of the clumsy wooden fable by the dreary ex-Etonian former colonial police official and hater of socialism, Orwell. Indeed, this caricature was even naively swallowed and regurgitated by some of the present dissident leaders who now justly complain when the same



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formula is applied to themselves. The millionaire press sticks to 'personalised politics', not merely because it loves sensation and 'drama' and 'human interest', but because its practitioners are truly only aware of the world of Fleet Street, Westminster smoking rooms and the West End clubs, and because its function is to *conceal* the real political questions before the nation. But in life the political questions have to be faced.

**It Moves**

The reflection of the pressure of the rising mass demand on sections of the upper leadership in Parliament and the unions is still partial, confused and halting—at the best, like a half-learned lesson repeated with incomplete comprehension. As an illustration of this process it is only necessary to recall the successive stages: from the endorsement of the £4,700 million rearmament programme in January of last year and firm declaration that it can and will be carried out, to the repudiation in April of the budget charges on teeth and spectacles, to the cautious criticism of the physical possibility of fulfilling a rearmament programme on such a scale, to the beginnings of criticism of the policy behind the rearmament programme, to the open exposure of American aggressive war plans and dictation in Britain, and finally to the emphatic declaration that the workers and soldiers of Britain will never fight in an American war against the Socialist Soviet Union. This shifting picture shows how the relentless pressure of events and of rising mass feeling carries forward the development.

**Keeping the Eye on the Ball**

It is no matter for surprise that this development towards a partial dissident expression on the part of sections of the old leadership is simultaneously accompanied by spluttering ejaculations against Communism and Communists (in order to rebut the accusation that the arguments used are drawn from those long put forward by Communists, since the alternative would involve admitting that the Communists were correct from the outset on the whole question of American policy and British subservience, the Marshall Plan and arms plan and its economic consequences, the drive to an aggressive third world war, etc.), gestures to Tito (essential to maintain 'respectability' in the eyes of ruling capitalist circles), denunciation of current militant workers' struggles as an offence against the sacred constitution,



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and the like. All this is the familiar hallmark of the would-be 'half-way' or 'facing both ways' ('third force') position. At the same time the pressure leads the dominant ruling sections of the right wing leadership to essay their parallel gestures of opposition as a concession to the demands of their followers, and to divide for the first time for twelve years the House of Commons on foreign policy, even though in an intrinsically absurd resolution which proved a boomerang. But the division took place. The dogma of bipartisan foreign policy suffered its first crack. And the next division on the arms vote revealed a revolt against the Whips, which raised the whole question of the use of discipline to impose an anti-working class policy, and in which the dominant right wing leadership found itself unable to impose the full sanctions it had originally demanded and compelled to accept a partial compromise. Through all this confusion of outward form and expression the battle of policy within the working class movement is in fact advancing and deepening. The Communists and militant workers have reached too mature a stage of political development to be provoked or sidetracked into sectional squabbles or personal issues from concentrating on the key decisive present task—to unite the whole movement for the battle against Toryism and against surrender to the American Tory war policy, and for a positive alternative programme of advance.

**Unity, Unity and Again Unity**

Unity in active struggle against Toryism and Tory policy in the Labour movement. Unity to defeat the present Tory offensive and bring down the Tory Government. Unity to defeat the drive to war and win the fight for peace. Unity to carry forward the entire movement for a new positive programme of advance, and for the election of a new Government on the basis of such a programme, in order to transform Britain's position in the world, end the American subservience and suicidal course along the road to ruin and a new war, and open the way to decisive economic and social changes. For this it is essential that all sections which are concerned over the present position, whatever their particular differences in political and ideological outlook, all sections which desire to prevent a third world war and to protect the national independence of Britain and the living standards of the people, shall find common ground and combine their efforts. Given such unity, there is no question that the over-



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whelming majority of the Labour movement can be won, and thereby the majority of the nation, to isolate the hard core of the dominant right-wing leadership which clings to the veiled coalition with Toryism and the American financiers and militarists, and to defeat Toryism.

**Communist Congress**

Nor is there any insuperable difficulty in finding such a common programme. Its elements already exist in current expression from all sides and in the manifest requirements of the situation. Reduction of the rearmament programme. Great Power negotiations for peace and all-round reduction of armaments. East-West trade. Restoration of the cuts in the social services and improvement of living standards. These and similar objectives are common to all sections of the wide and growing body of opinion in the Labour movement which seeks to end co-operation with Toryism and formulate policy anew. For these aims a majority can be won in the Labour movement. For these aims a majority can be won in the country. Active unity in the fight for these aims is the supreme task of the hour. It is to this task above all, at the same time as presenting its long-term programme for the British Road to Socialism, that the Communist Congress at Easter will address itself, and will assuredly play its part in assisting the common advance.

Commune Day, 1952. R.P.D.

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# HOW WE BEGAN THE FIGHT

EDDIE LLOYD

*(Secretary of Parc and Dare Lodge, South Wales Area of the National Union of Mineworkers)*

FOLLOWING the announcement of the Butler Cuts, the chairman of the Parc and Dare Lodge raised the question with his committee, asking them to give a lead to the coalfield by taking immediate action through the stopping of Saturday work until the Cuts were withdrawn. The proposal received the unanimous support of the Lodge committee, and it was decided to place the recommendation before a mass meeting of the workmen of Parc and Dare.

At a well attended meeting of the workmen on February 3, the chairman made an appeal to the men to support the committee's recommendation. There were a number of questions and a lively discussion took place. Some of the men argued that we should act constitutionally and leave the matter to the Executive Committee of the Union, and that we should confine ourselves to the passing of a resolution calling upon the E.C. to initiate the action. Others felt that it was no good Parc and Dare taking action alone, and that it would be preferable to approach other Lodges through the Joint Lodges Committees and have their agreement, so that Parc and Dare would not be alone in taking action. This point of view did command some support, although there was general agreement that some form of action was needed.

However, the Chairman and others pointed out that what was vital and essential was that Parc and Dare should give a lead. They should take action immediately, and on the basis of action taken, to then make the approach to the other Lodges in the coalfield to give their support. To pass a resolution or to express a point of view was not sufficient. If a decisive lead was given support could be won. The chairman stated he was confident that the miners of Wales were looking for such a lead, and if Parc and Dare gave the lead it would meet with widespread response.

The meeting decided by a big majority to support the recommendation of the Lodge committee, and the following proposals were agreed to:



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1. To have an immediate week-end stoppage of production at the Parc and Dare Collieries.
2. That the Lodge circulate every Lodge in the coalfield soliciting support for action on similar lines.
3. That an appeal be made to the E.C. and the Lodges to demand the calling of a coalfield conference for coalfield action.

Pickets were on top of the pit that night, but only three men who had not been at the meeting and did not know of the decision turned up for work. Immediately they were informed of the position they returned home. The following statement was then sent to every lodge in the coalfield, and special letters were sent to the secretaries of Joint Lodges committees.

To all Lodges in the South Wales Coalfield.

Dear Friends,

At a mass meeting of the Parc and Dare Workmen on Sunday, 3rd February, it was decided that Parc and Dare should give a lead to the South Wales Coalfield in refusing to produce coal at the week-ends until the cuts in Social Services by this Tory Government have been withdrawn. It was also decided to contact every Lodge in the coalfield to support the action we have taken and urge upon the Executive Council of our Union to convene a special coalfield conference in order to get coalfield action.

We in Parc and Dare have taken this action because we feel that the cuts imposed by the Tory Government jeopardise the future of our children, and of the Old Age Pensioners. These cuts are only the beginning, if we allow the Tory Government to get away with these, bigger cuts will follow on the 4th March, Budget Day.

Parc and Dare miners have decided to act NOW because we feel that this is the only way that the policy of the Cuts can be defeated. We are pleased that the Executive Council of our Union have unanimously passed a resolution against the Butler Cuts. However, we in Parc and Dare feel that resolutions are insufficient, resolutions must be backed by ACTION.

The Miners have power in their hands, United Action by the Miners can force the Government of War and Cuts to change its policy or get out. Churchill of Tonypandy Fame doesn't listen to reason, the War-monger is only impressed by ACTION. Let the Miners of Wales lead the people of the country into action, and show him that we are not prepared to have our living standards attacked to serve the interests of the Tories.

We urge all Lodges to join us and agree to the immediate stopping of Saturday production shift, we also urge all Lodges to send resolutions to the Executive Council demanding COALFIELD ACTION against the Cuts.

Budget Day has been brought forward to March 4th, if we don't take action now, bigger cuts are on the way. We appeal to all Lodges to get into contact with all organisations in their locality to build united Committees of action to win the people of Wales into a mighty movement



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of protest to defeat the Cuts, or get a new Government that will carry out the wishes and the aspirations of the people.

On behalf of the Parc and Dare Lodge,

Chairman: Tom Evans
Vice-Chairman: Alcwyn Meredith
Secretary: Eddie Lloyd

This statement had a profound effect throughout the coalfield. Realising the militant role that had been displayed by the miners of West Wales we had anticipated a favourable response from them; we were not disappointed. A special Inter-valley joint committee (Dulais and Swansea valleys) was convened immediately, and they decided to give us full support. On the following morning pit head meetings were held and eight of the nine Lodges in the Dulais Valley Group decided to stop Saturday work immediately. The Swansea Valley Group, whilst not immediately deciding to support, were extremely sympathetic and agreed to call a conference of all Swansea Lodges to further discuss the matter.

Another Inter-Valley Joint Lodges meeting was hastily convened where thirty-six Lodges were represented. Here the question of leaving the matter to the E.C. was again raised, and of adopting constitutional methods. It was pointed out that the E.C. had passed a resolution protesting against the Cuts, but that the hands of the E.C. were tied by the decisions of the National Executive, and it would be exceedingly difficult for them to give a call for action. As the only way in which the Cuts could be defeated was through the united action of the workers, the only way in which the miners could play an effective part in the struggle was by taking unofficial action. It was also expressed that if a large number of Lodges were won for supporting action then it would be possible to get a coalfield conference to be won for action, and that the National Executive of the Union would have to take a serious note of such a situation. With the exception of one Lodge the conference unanimously agreed to give every support to Parc and Dare, and to hold pit head meetings of the workmen immediately.

It was reported that in some of the Lodges, particularly in the Rhondda, the Parc and Dare circular had not been discussed, and that efforts were being made to keep it from the rank and file. To deal with this, the Rhondda Joint Lodges got out a leaflet which was widely distributed at the pit heads, making a direct



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appeal to the miners to demand Lodge meetings to discuss the matter. These leaflets created a big impression.

TO ALL RHONDDA MINERS

The movement against the 'Butler Cuts' is spreading throughout the Coalfield, Lodge after Lodge joining the growing movement and stopping Saturday production.

Our action has already had tremendous effect, and if Hundred per cent solidarity was achieved we could deal a terrific blow to the Tory policy of Cuts, and force Churchill (of Tonypandy fame), and his Government to change their Policy, or get out and make room for a new government that would carry out the wishes and aspirations of the People.

The 'Butler Cuts' are only the beginning, Bigger Cuts will follow in the next Budget on March 4th unless the People take action now. Let us remember the Old Age Pensioners who fought and sacrificed in their time to improve their standards, think of the children whose future depends on our determination to retain the conditions so bitterly fought for by our fathers. We ask you to consider the effect of the Cuts on your wage packets for years to come, while Saturday working can be resumed as soon as the cuts in Social Services are restored.

By ending Saturday Production we will be demonstrating our determination to oppose economies at the expense of the workers while profits continue to rise. We appeal to every miner to support the struggle.

Our Executive Council has passed a resolution protesting against the Cuts, resolutions by themselves are not sufficient, we as miners can strengthen their hand by action. Let us remember the fight against the 'Fines', the action that forced the abolition of the implementation of the Master and Servant Act.

You will note the concern of that 'Staunch Friend' of the South Wales Miners, the *Western Mail*, at our fight against the Cuts, they are trying their best to hinder and frustrate our fight against their 'enemies' the Tories.

Again over Forty Lodges have already decided to join in the fight against this reduction in the living standards of the People, and still support is rolling in, not only from South Wales but from all parts of the English Coalfield.

This is not only a miners' fight, other unions and organisations are already showing an interest and have called for joint action by a mass protest demonstration before Budget Day.

On behalf of the Rhondda Joint Lodges.

The decision of the E.C. of the South Wales Area of the Union to condemn the stoppage, and declare it unofficial and unconstitutional had a dampening effect on a number of Lodges. However, it had very little effect on those Lodges that were already out, but on the contrary they realised they would have to work harder than ever if the stoppage of Saturday work was to be extended. There is every likelihood that had it not been



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for the statement by the E.C. the majority of the pits in South Wales would have stopped. As it was the stoppage extended, for on February 23rd, sixty-five Lodges (some of them the largest in South Wales) embracing about 40,000 miners, were on stop.

It was also realised that the fight against the cuts was not an issue for the miners alone but for the working class as a whole, and for the people. If the cuts were to be defeated, or the Tory government to get out, it was necessary to win the whole of the people into action. As the Rhondda was the birthplace of many great movements in the past, it was felt that an opportunity presented itself to win the people into action against the cuts. However, a Rhondda branch of the Transport and General Workers Union were thinking the same way, and they convened a conference of Rhondda organisations to establish a committee to organise a united demonstration in the Rhondda. Twenty-one organisations were represented at the initial meeting with forty-two delegates. The Parc and Dare Lodge played a leading part in this committee, and I was elected to act as the secretary of the campaign committee. It was decided to hold the demonstration in the place that Churchill made famous in 1910, Tonypandy.

A coalfield conference was held at Cardiff on February 27, where a resolution of the E.C. was defeated, the conference calling for stronger action than what was contained in the resolution.

What of the future? The feeling is growing that there won't be a future as long as there is a Tory Government. The policy of war and cuts can only end in disaster for the people. The attempts by the right wing Labour leaders to prevent the development of action and to confine opposition to Toryism to debates in the House of Commons is not having the desired effect. The feeling is growing that opposition in Parliament is not sufficient by itself. It's the action of the people that will prove decisive. The Tories can always produce a majority in the lobbies as long as they have the majority of Members of Parliament. They got in by lies, fraud and deceit, and if there was an election now they would be defeated. They hang on to government in spite of having lost the majority support of the people. The feeling is growing that if we are to save Britain from war and cuts in our standards of living, every possible step must be taken to build up mass action against the Tory Government.



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# TRADE: FREE OR BOND?

HENRY PURCELL

ON the eve of the Butler Budget, the Tory government of Australia delivered a body blow at Britain. Throwing overboard all the pledges given at the Empire Conference in London to cut purchases from the dollar countries, Mr. Menzies imposed instead slashing cuts on imports from Britain. Cars, textiles, washing machines, cutlery and a vast range of other products were all cut to one-fifth of last year's total. Even heavy machinery was reduced to three-fifths. In many of these categories, Australia was Britain's best customer.

Everyone knows that this action will bring more unemployment to Lancashire, to the Midlands and other centres already hard hit by the drop in domestic purchasing power, the steel shortage and the increasing competition in export markets. No one believes that in the present state of trade in the capitalist world, Britain will find alternative markets. Yet within a few hours of the Australian announcement Whitehall launched a wishful-thinking campaign through an obviously inspired message to the newspapers.

The Sunday *Observer* on the day after the Australian cuts plaintively declared that they would 'add a new spur to manufacturers to expand to the limit their exports to North America'. Such is the state of mental bankruptcy to which the cold war reduces its warriors. A child could forecast the effects on Britain of this policy of beggar-my-neighbour. Mr. Butler cuts food imports from the countries of Western Europe. They retort by cutting imports from Britain. Australia stops buying British cars and textiles. Britain will reply by reducing her purchases of Australian wool and grain. All of them join in the scramble to sell their goods to the United States and her dollar satellites. If by devaluing their currency and cutting costs they succeed in making any serious inroad into the U.S. markets, the appropriate 'lobby' in Washington soon gets to work and very quickly redresses the balance in favour of the American producers. And all the time, Japan and West Germany, financed by Washington and paying slave wages to their workers steadily capture the available markets.

The City and the politicians to whom the City gives orders, may for a time watch with satisfaction Britain's mounting



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unemployment figures. But even in these circles looking to unemployment as a means of 'disciplining' the workers, there is a growing realisation that Britain's survival as a great trading nation is now in the balance. She is the one country in the world which cannot afford to play this game. Britain's economy cannot be fitted into the pattern of cold war. If she is to survive, she must sell to the areas of the world offering markets for her goods and food and raw materials for her congested industrial population. The businessmen know it. The economists know it. Even the right wing leaders of the General Council know it. All of them know, too, that the only way to save Britain is to break through the American embargoes and to defy the Battle Act under which any odd U.S. administrator can wreck every trade agreement concluded with the socialist world.

The International Trade Conference in Moscow to be held on April 3-10 challenges the whole conception behind the cold war on the trade front. That is why it is so important that some representative British industrialists and economists have accepted the invitations to attend. It is an open secret that many more would have liked to go but have been deterred by government pressure. Trade union leaders, whose members are already suffering from the gathering slump would equally have liked to attend but they fear the threat of the T.U.C. General Council to impose disciplinary measures. Mr. Eden, answering a Tory M.P.'s question about the Moscow Conference declared 'The true purpose of the conference is to organise popular pressure in the non-Communist countries against the present restrictions on the export of strategic material to Russia and against the defence programmes of the Western Powers', but he went on to say that the British government did not propose to stop anybody who wished to go from attending the conference. Even Mr. Eden, if he chose to abandon the mumbo-jumbo imported from Washington, must know that but for Russian grain, Polish eggs and bacon and timber from Russia and the new democracies, Britain's economy would be in a far worse state. Putting it at its lowest level, she would be far less able to meet the arms programme. It was very easy some months ago to break pledged agreements and refuse to deliver machine tools to Russia or tankers to Poland because these commodities can now sell for a higher price elsewhere, but the government knows that the cancellation of the agreements with the socialist world will spell disaster and near-starvation. Between the wars, Britain learned the hard way that



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she needed Russian trade; the Arcos raid, the embargo imposed at the time of the trial of the Metro-Vickers engineers, were the result of putting political prejudice before the real interests in the country, and in both cases the Tory politicians eventually had to retract. When Russia became an ally in 1941, industrialists admitted that but for Russian orders during the depression years, British industry would have collapsed.

In the present crisis, Britain has the chance of learning the economic facts of life. The Soviet Union has always based her economic policy on her willingness to conduct peaceful trade with all countries irrespective of their political systems who are willing to abide by agreements. The Soviet Union has never defaulted on a commercial agreement. A trade pact signed in Moscow represents the safest investment in the world today. It is completely in accordance with the whole record of the U.S.S.R. that she should seek to increase peaceful trade as a means of lessening the tensions between East and West. When Ilya Ehrenburg at the World Peace Congress in Warsaw in 1950 declared that he was for peace 'not only with the America of Paul Robeson and Howard Fast, but with the America of Mr. Acheson and Mr. Truman', he was putting forward the same basic principle.

The Soviet Union and the World Peace Movement support the International Trade Conference because they see in trade one of the most hopeful means of building a bridge between the socialist and the capitalist worlds. The International Committee responsible for the organisation of the Conference has drawn up an agenda which excludes all discussions on the relative merits of the rival economic systems. The conference will seek only to find ways and means for extending trade and for using the resources of both socialist and capitalist countries to raise the living standards of the peoples. China is sending a delegation with authority to negotiate on-the-spot agreements. India, Pakistan, Indonesia and the other Asiatic countries offering natural markets to British industrial goods, have all shown intense interest. Professor Lange of Poland hinted at one of the most important developments in the modern world when he said in a lecture given in London that the countries building socialism would be willing to modify their economic plans in order to provide for the needs of capitalist countries with whom agreements are concluded.

The Moscow Conference can begin a new era in post-war



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relationship. It can force on the Western world a realisation of the truth of the declaration of Mr. Gunnar Myrdal, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe, that

> Political differences, even when pronounced, should not and need not render economic co-operation impossible.

If the capitalists of Britain disbelieve this let them look at the example of Sweden. Sweden has refused to enter the North Atlantic Pact. She has refused to gear her economy with the arms programme of Washington. As a result she is not affected by American embargoes. She has concluded life-giving trade pacts with the Soviet Union, Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe. Her people are warmed by Polish coal. Her pigs feed on Polish maize and provide bacon and ham for Swedish people. She sells her machinery and other industrial products to the countries of the East, without having to ask permission in Washington. The *Economist* in a recent article expressed fierce anger at Sweden's action. 'Sweden's trade with Poland', it declared, 'offends against the economic strategy of the Atlantic Pact Treaty Powers'. The *Economist* threatened darkly that in view of Sweden's dependence on Western sources for oil 'it is obviously politic for her to take notice of the economic strategy of N.A.T.O. and of Congressional opinion in the U.S.'.

No strings to Marshall Aid! There you have the reality of Britain's trade crisis. If she had the courage of Sweden she could break the bonds. She could find markets for her goods—markets more secure than ever before because the world of planned socialist economy stretches from the China Sea to the Elbe and embraces 800,000,000 men and women. She could share in the abundance which socialist planning is producing. She would depend neither on the East nor the West but would stand proudly as a free nation. But while she is tied to the American war machine, while she imposes on her people the burden of war preparation, which will wreck every hope of social advance, while she allows officials of a foreign nation to tell her where she shall buy and where she shall sell, she will stumble ever further along the path to disaster.

Those who demand East-West trade, who seek to find new trade outlets at Moscow speak for the true interests of the British people.



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# L E O N A R D O  d a

★

"WHEN besieged by ambitious tyrants I find a means of offence and defence in order to preserve the chief gift of nature, which is liberty."

★

"HOW by an appliance many are able to remain for some time under water. **How and why I do not describe my method of remaining under water for as long a time as I can remain without food: and this I do not publish or divulge on account of the evil nature of men. . . .**"

★

"THOSE who are enamoured of practice without science are like a pilot who goes into a ship without rudder or compass and never has any certainty where he is going. Practice should always be based on a sound knowledge of theory. . . ."

*Extracts from* **The Notebook of Leonardo da Vinci**

★

Portrait: *Leo*

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# VINCI . 1452 - 1519

*Vinci*

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# LEONARDO DA VINCI

J. D. BERNAL, F.R.S.

*May I be deprived of movement if I ever weary of being useful.*
Leonardo da Vinci.

There are men whose achievements we need no centenaries to celebrate. Their works speak for themselves. This is especially true for the great artist who writes in a universal language which neither time nor distance diminishes. (*) Centenaries do, nevertheless, serve a useful purpose in reminding us of the total achievement of a man, asking us to assess what his work meant in his own time and how its message needs be read for the work of our own days. The turn of centuries sometimes brings back a close and fresh echo of what has been, in the intervening time, blurred and distorted. Leonardo da Vinci was a great man of a great age. His native gifts and abilities were enormous, but they were multiplied by the circumstances of the age he was born into. He appears at a crucial point in history where art was at its peak and science was just beginning its triumphant career. He contributed more than any other single man to the advancement of both and he showed, in his own person, how harmoniously and effectively they needed to be combined. That union has since been almost lost, but with the new movement of society, it is on the way to being reformed. Gorki, with the experience of the revolution behind him, has shown the way in which the great individual is himself the special product of a period of social stress such as that which marked the end of the Middle Ages.

> The rapid development of the power of the individual has no other explanation than that, in periods of social storms the personality becomes the focal point of thousands of wills which have selected it for their instrument and we see the individual divinely strong and beautiful. illuminated by the bright flame of the desires of his people, his class or his party.
>
> Who the individual is does not matter . . . what matters is that all these heroes appear before us as carriers of collective energy as mouthpieces of mass desires. . . . Always in the course of history it was the people who created the man. A specially striking example of this is

* Leonardo da Vinci, himself, knew well enough the power of the medium he used. 'That science is more useful whose fruit is most communicable to all generations of the universe'. (Leonardo da Vinci, Paragone.)



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provided by the Italian city republics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries where the creative activities of the Italian people embraced all spheres of the spirit, the entire field of human relations, and created truly great art, bringing forth an amazing number of great masters of the word, the brush and the chisel.

From an article on ' The Destruction of Personality ', in *Literature and Life*, p. 117.

The many-sidedness of the individual was itself a feature of liberation from the limits imposed by the state order of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance was, in Engels' words, writing before the changes he had foreseen and worked for:—

It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind has so far experienced, a time which called for giants and produced giants—giants in power of thought, passion and character, in universality and learning. The men who founded the modern rule of the bourgeoisie had anything but bourgeois limitations. On the contrary, the adventurous character of the time inspired them to a greater or less degree. . . .

Leonardo da Vinci was not only a great painter but also a great mathematician, mechanician and engineer, to whom the most diverse branches of physics are indebted for important discoveries . . .

The heroes of that time had not yet come under the servitude of the division of labour, the restricting effects of which, with its production of one-sidedness, we so often notice in their successors. But what is especially characteristic of them is that they almost all pursue their lives and activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight, one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. Hence the fullness and force of character that makes them complete men.

Preface to *Dialectics of Nature*, quoted in *Literature and Art*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selections from their writings, New York, 1947, pp. 73f.

Leonardo da Vinci more than any other single figure of his time expresses that completeness in his life and work. The reason he does so is that by his birth and training—he was the illegitimate son of a successful local solicitor, apprenticed at fourteen to the leading goldsmith of Florence—he carried with him the training of the craftsman rather than the scholar. He had no formal education and despised those that had. What he valued was the direct experience of his eye and hand:—

If indeed I have no power to quote from authors as they have, it is a far bigger and more worthy thing to read by the light of experience, which is the instructress of their masters. They strut about puffed up and pompous, decked out and adorned not with their own labours but by those of others, and they will not even allow me my own. And if they despise me who am an inventor, how much more should blame be given to themselves who are not inventors but trumpeters and reciters of the work of others. . . .



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> Those who are inventors and interpreters between Nature and man as compared with the reciters and trumpeters of the works of others, are to be considered simply as is an object in front of a mirror in comparison with its image when seen in the mirror, the one being something in itself, the other nothing; people whose debt to nature is small, for it seems only by chance that they wear human form, but for this one might class them with the herds of beasts.
>
> *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Edward MacCurdy, London, 1938, Vol. 1, p. 61.

He rejected equally the age-old religious philosophical idea, born of upper class contempt for hand work, that experience was delusive and that we should rather depend on tradition or pure reasoning.

'Experience is never at fault; it is only your judgment that is in error in promising itself such results from experience as are not caused by our experiments'. (Loc. cit., p. 70.) Leonardo was, however, far from having the idea that crude experience was enough—he understood the need to refine it by science, particularly mathematics, which he thought of as itself derived from material experience.

> No human investigation can be called true science without passing through mathematical tests, and if you say that the sciences which begin and end in the mind contain truth, this cannot be conceded, and must be denied for many reasons. First and foremost because in such mental discourses experience does not come in, without which nothing reveals itself with certainty.
>
> *Paragone*, a Comparison of the Arts by Leonardo da Vinci, ed. Irma A. Richter, London, 1949, p. 23.

Leonardo at Florence, or indeed elsewhere, produced little finished work, but what he did was of such excellence that even in an age of superb art no one questioned his personal supremacy in painting. But this did not satisfy him. His idea of painting as a science involved such a range of investigations and practical trials that only the purse of a great prince could provide. He found it in Ludovico il Moro, Duke of Milan, at that time the greatest and wealthiest state of Italy. Its revenues were equal to those of France and England combined. They were derived from an intensive agriculture based on irrigation and a flourishing metal industry, particularly of arms manufacture. But the government was a dictatorship based on crime and violence covered by a magnificent and wasteful expenditure, and had long forfeited the support of the people. Leonardo was appointed on the strength of an application where he stressed his ability to



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construct all kinds of new military machines, mentioning almost as an afterthought: 'Also, I can execute sculpture in marble, bronze or clay and also painting, in which my work will stand comparison with anyone else whoever he may be'. (loc. cit., p. 553).

It was in Milan that Leonardo was able to develop to the full his mechanical bent in the devising and constructing of machine tools and civil engineering plant. His drawings bear witness to his close attention to workshop practice of the day, to which he himself could contribute his unexampled capacities for drawing and invention. (*)

But the scientist and artist were always blended with the engineer. Indeed we can see that he had conceived all his work as a great unity, comprised in what he called the Science of Painting set out in his one book the *Paragone*. To him this science was necessarily all inclusive for:

> If you despise painting, which is the sole imitator of all visible works of nature, you certainly will be despising a subtle invention which brings philosophy and subtle speculation to bear on the nature of all forms—sea and land, plants and animals, grasses and flowers—which are enveloped in shade and light. Truly painting is a science, the true-born child of nature. For painting is born of nature; to be more correct we should call it the grandchild of nature, since all visible things were brought forth by nature and these, her children, have given birth to painting. Therefore we may justly speak of it as the grandchild of nature and as related to God.—*Paragone.*

His view of painting was absolutely straightforward; it was to represent nature, solid, living and moving, on a flat, coloured, changeless surface. To him this was primarily a scientific problem and he bent all his energies to solve it. His two greatest contributions to its solution was his use of light and shade as well as atmospheric colour, to render solidity and depth, and the creation of the illusion of movement. Both required a deep knowledge of natural science. But Leonardo could not turn to the natural scientists—they hardly existed—he had to make his science directly from observation and experiment. The enormous range of his achievement here in optics, in mechanics, in geology, natural history, anatomy and physiology is a proof of his altogether exceptional ability to see and set down in his drawings

* His interest in these was more than academic. He hoped to make his fortune out of a semi-automatic needle-polishing machine while at the other extreme his gigantic double boom mechanical canal excavator anticipated modern Soviet methods of mechanical excavation.



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and notebooks the most significant aspects of nature. It also bears evidence to a tireless industry and firm purpose that belies the reports of his contemporaries of his inability to achieve what he undertook. No one but himself understood what he was trying to do.

But his scientific success is at least as much a measure of the fact that he started clear of the encumbrance of traditional beliefs; that his education was the materialist practice of the workshop, not the idealist disputation of the schools.

> They say knowledge born of experience is mechanical, but that knowledge born and consummated in the mind is scientific. . . . But to me it seems that all sciences are vain and full of errors that are not born of experience, mother of all certainty and are not tested by experience.—*Paragone*, p. 25.

Leonardo's materialism was anything but static, indeed he was the first to express clearly the new concept of movement, of dynamics, that characterises modern science in contrast to that of the Greeks. Movement he loved and studied endlessly—in water, with his practical preoccupation with canals and irrigation; in air, with the flight of birds and his own attempts at mechanical flight; in animals and human beings 'laughing, weeping, fighting and working'. He understood movement, not as an abstraction, but in terms of force acting on heavy matter. He partly grasped the concept of inertia, the basis of the new physics of Galileo and Newton, and related it to the endless studies he made of guns, mortars and missiles of all kinds. He lived just at the time when the whole art of war was being revolutionised by the first large-scale use of field artillery, itself made possible by improved techniques and the beginnings of concentrations of capital.

If war and its needs were to inspire much of his work, it was also to destroy it. The wealth of the Italian cities and their control by a parasitic class that had forfeited the support of the people who had created it, invited foreign invasion. Milan was occupied by the French. Leonardo's model for a great bronze horse was used as a butt for archers. His only other positive achievement, his fresco of the Last Supper, was left fading, unfinished, on a damp monastery wall to be finally obliterated as the result of American bombing.

From that time on he led an unsettled and happy life. He could still produce masterpieces—the enigmatic Mona Lisa belongs to this period. For three years he was chief engineer to Cesare



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Borgia, the 'Prince' of Macchiavelli, in his criminal and futile campaign in the Romagna. His hatred of the brutalities of war deepened with his experience of its reality. He left the service of Cesare before his final collapse and returned to Florence, where his chief achievement was the preparation of a picture, never finished and now lost, 'The Battle of Anghiari', in which he compressed all his science of representing movement and emotion and all his hatred of the violence and horror of war.

But by now Leonardo was an ageing man—he was beginning to be overshadowed by younger and more productive rivals such as Raphael and Michelangelo. He retired from his native land and spent his last days as an honoured pensioner of Francis I—a living symbol of the Renaissance he was bringing to France.

Leonardo's life has impressed succeeding generations by its contrast of great projects and unfinished performance. Some have said that he had allowed his science to interfere with his art, not realising how, to him, art was a science. But although no human being in a short life could have ever achieved what he set out to do, his later failure is as much due to the times in which he lived as was his early success. The formative period of the Renaissance had indeed come to an end in his lifetime. The modern world was not to come straight out of a civilisation devoted to knowledge and beauty, but had to pass through the fires of war and the destructive political and religious crises of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The Italian Renaissance, built in the first burst of liberation of the bourgeoisie, was on too narrow an economic base in a world still largely feudal. Its own inner contradictions were too much for it—it could inject a leaven into the rest of Europe, it could not save itself.

Much of Leonardo's work perished in his lifetime—far more was lost after his death. As a painter his school carried on his manner but without his inspiration or the science which was at the root of it. Nevertheless, all painting since his time bears his mark. He had solved the basic problem of representation of space in pictures. It was for others to find out how to use the solution.

In science there was no such means of transmission. Leonardo buried all his conclusions in no kind of order in his voluminous notebooks and very few were ever able to see them or make use of them. But less was lost than might appear. The work which Leonardo set out to do in science would in any case have had to



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be done again by many men with patience and measurement and calculation. He had arrived at, or near, many important generalisations by observation and intuition—the solutions needed to be checked and proved before they could be used.

What really mattered was that he had blazed the way. He had shown what could be done. Even if others could not follow exactly in his tracks, they knew that there was a way to knowledge through experience and so had the hope they needed in order to find it for themselves. Despite wars, despite the Counter-Reformation, a school of Italian science grew throughout all the sixteenth century. Before it was damped by the burning of Bruno and the condemnation of Galileo, it had sown the seed in the active commercial world of Northern Europe. Bacon and Descartes, Harvey, Huyghens and Newton, with their new instruments and their new organisation—the scientific societies—were to complete a scientific revolution which Leonardo had foreshadowed.

But this is not all. Though Leonardo's work, blended with that of the other men of his time great and small, has passed into the general tradition of Art and Science—it still remains as fresh as when it was first made. The quality of greatness in human achievement is that of perennial life. A drawing of Leonardo can transmit to us directly, new delights, new understanding, new purposes. Through it we can know that the men who made these things are not dead, but live in our own work. And especially does that message ring in our time, also one of struggle and achievement. We need Leonardo to show us what a man can do and how he can draw his strength from the living and working tradition of the people.

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# LISBON AND AFTER

REV. STANLEY EVANS

RARELY has there been such unanimity on a diplomatic issue in the press as there has been about the official communiqués of the Lisbon Conference of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (N.A.T.O.). From *The Times* to the *Church Times* the line-up has been complete.

> Reflection on the recent Lisbon meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Council reinforces the first impression, that the pronouncements of the meeting were largely window-dressing. Official spokesmen were jubilant: Mr. Acheson told the world that 'a new day is dawning': Mr. Eden hailed 'the beginning of a new era'. These claims are ridiculously exaggerated. All the Lisbon decisions were decisions only on paper.
>
> (*Church Times*, March 7, 1952.)

> It is difficult to understand either the meaning or the purpose of the communiqué published by the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty in Lisbon. This states in words which seem almost to have been chosen for their ambiguity—they have no other virtue—that the member nations will provide this year 'approximately fifty divisions in appropriate conditions of combat readiness'. Only the most ingenuous will suppose that General Eisenhower will in fact have fifty divisions ready and able to fight in Europe by the end of the year. The exact figures are rightly secret, but the present force is generally believed to be rather less than half that number.
>
> (*The Times*, February 26, 1952).

*The Times* article was headed 'The Phantom Army' and with that apt phrase that part of the subject may be safely left. Nobody believes in the fifty divisions. Unfortunately, however, all too many have concluded that because the fifty divisions do not have to be taken seriously, that therefore the Lisbon Conference as a whole does not have to be taken seriously, and this is a profound mistake. Certainly our knowledge of Lisbon is strictly limited. Decisions will have been taken in secret which will only become apparent with the passing of time. Nevertheless there are certain things about Lisbon which we do know and with which we must reckon apart from the simple but important fact that when major powers begin discussing in public how many divisions they will have in 'combat readiness' within a given period they are no longer thinking it necessary to make any secret of their ultimate intentions.

The Lisbon Conference was the climax of a series of meetings



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that had taken place in London and elsewhere all of which have led (according to Mr. Eden in the House of Commons on February 28) to:

1. Germany (meaning the Western German Government) agreeing to join a European Army and to make its own financial contribution towards it.

2. Britain ceasing to take occupation costs from Germany and taking them instead from the N.A.T.O. fund (or do they count as part of Britain's contribution to the fund?).

3. Germany meeting other costs (including 'defence costs in Berlin').

4. Some agreement as to where, in the European scheme, military orders shall be placed.

5. A protocol to be added to the North Atlantic Treaty which extends the obligations of the N.A.T.O. powers to the 'European Defence Community'.

6. Some interweaving of these two organisations.

7. An attempt to bring Austria into this network (if only she could get her 'full freedom and independence').

8. The final admission of Greece and Turkey into the organisation.

9. The dovetailing of military plans and preparations.

10. The proposed extension of airfields, communications and headquarters in Western Europe and the payment for them.

11. The N.A.T.O. Council remaining in permanent session in Paris by the use of deputies.

Many of the questions included in this list have been matters of acute inter-governmental discussion and disagreement over a long period. That they have now been solved makes possible—at a governmental level—the real and actual creation of the 'European Army' (France, Western Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg), and the correlation with this of British and other armed forces and the annual submission to N.A.T.O. scrutiny and criticism of all defence budgets and production targets. Among the most interesting concessions made at the meeting was Herr Adenauer's agreement that the European Army leadership should decide what Germany should make. In return he appears to have got the deletion from the Occupation Statute of the clauses banning German production of atomic weapons, guided missiles, submarines and aircraft. At the same time, while France has secured that Germany does not get a seat on N.A.T.O., Germany has secured that she does get a seat on the European Army Council.

Verily all have won. But who shall get the prizes?

The *New Statesman* perhaps came closer to the answer when it opined that:



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> . . . there is some sense in all this nonsense. The phoney balance-sheets, the paper armies and synthetic optimism are all designed with one objective—to keep the dollars flowing across the Atlantic. Mr. Acheson, Mr. Harriman, and General Eisenhower are joined with the European Ministers in an attempt to persuade Congress that everything in N.A.T.O. is fine and justifies a further dose of military assistance in 1952-53. Indeed the whole elaborate show at Lisbon was motivated not by any serious military planning but by purely political considerations. Bankrupted by rearmament, we must rearm still further in order to obtain the dollars to stave off a formal declaration of bankruptcy. And, with each fresh dose of dollars, our long-term economic prospects deteriorate and our dependence on America grows more acute.
>
> (*New Statesman and Nation*, March 1, 1952.)

This is almost the answer. America gets the prize and why? For America to handle a lot of separate countries is one thing—to handle a more or less unified organisation in which aid can be refused to any member who refuses to toe the line is quite another. As William H. Draper, jr., United States Special Representative in Europe, put it:

> The members of the N.A.T.O. met at Lisbon as 12 countries working together on parallel lines. When they parted the lines had converged together for the mutual benefit of all, and the size of the organization had been increased to 14 by the addition of Turkey and Greece.
>
> (*New York Herald-Tribune*, March 7, 1952.)

There is no great problem in each of the nations concerned being bilked of the various safeguards they have secured: revisions at later stages in all these matters are easy enough. But is not then the revising of themselves out of the plan equally easy? Unfortunately the answer to this question is 'No'. As the *New Statesman* rightly points out, the longer each country is in, its 'dependence upon America grows more acute'.

The whole essence of Lisbon is that Western European (including British) military planning has been advanced in a context which makes each of the countries concerned individually and collectively more dependent upon America, and the longer the thing goes on the more certain is America of a subservient European military force to do its fighting for it, each country facing the alternative of submission or economic collapse after, by its adhesion to the Battle Act, it has itself cut away any other possibility of economic survival. And if popular pressure tries to pull a country out there is always the clause in the North Atlantic Treaty about 'internal aggression' waiting to be used.

From the official American point of view Lisbon was an outstanding success. So it is not surprising that *The Times* (which



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seems to stand as much today for an American Munich as it did at an earlier period for the German one) two days after its exposure of 'the phantom army', wrote of the Conference: 'diplomatically it has been a striking success'. And *The Times* is right. Lisbon represents a brilliant American diplomatic victory and therefore a deadly danger to the peace of the world which the U.S.A. so arduously assails.

Diplomatic victories are of great importance and should never be under-emphasised. But they have to be followed through—while they score some points the really high scoring comes from the ball being physically placed between the posts. And here we come to the snags. The article we have just quoted goes on:

> All these agreements, however, are based on a hypothesis which has yet to be proved—that the German and French Parliaments will ratify the European Defence Community.

And later:

> The position, therefore, remains unchanged—the Governments have shown that they can agree, but the people have yet to show that they will.
>
> (*The Times*, February 28, 1952.)

Exactly. And well may we echo the corn-law rhymester, Ebenezer Elliott and say 'God save the people', for it is the people, and the people alone, who will save us all yet. And, let us be frank, the people are not at all in bad form. In the three key countries we are here concerned with, Western Germany, France and Great Britain, they have had a mighty lot to put up with since 1945, to say nothing of what went before and, while they have grumbled, they have been pretty docile. But there are signs that their moods are changing.

In Germany, with a very high percentage of families split asunder at least in the second and third degrees by the East-West division, they start with a tremendous bias towards German unity. They know that war means civil war. They see not only trade union leaders but respectable church leaders like Niemöller and solid church politicians right of centre like Dr. Heinemann and Frau Wessel opposing rearmament and they are moving into the breach in mighty numbers. The forces ranged against them are powerful and sinister—the Generals and industrialists all over again, the disconsolate millions of deliberately unsettled settlers from the Oder-Neisse lands—but the Western German people are fighting. Dockers refuse to unload munitions ships from Britain. Strikes multiply. The Bavarian Trade Union



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Congress on February 10 began by shouting down the Chairman of the West German T.U.C. who urged support of remilitarisation and then, after ten hours of debate, decided that remilitarisation would lower the already low living standards and that the leadership must work out the necessary measures to prevent the creation of the projected army. These measures, said their Secretary at once, 'would naturally include the general strike weapon'. The French *Le Monde* (February 13) estimates that 90 per cent of West German youth are against remilitarisation.

In France economic disaster produces Government crisis. Economic crisis stems from the failure to recover from the war plus the ruinous colonial war in Indo-China plus an output on N.A.T.O. and all its works beyond capacity, and hoarding and speculation as one disaster succeeds another. The present temporary solution which keeps out De Gaulle was to be expected because on present showing he might not put the Lisbon measures through the Assembly (and what did lead his 27 erstwhile supporters to change coat overnight?). But the danger of a new authoritarianism when the Pinay Government collapses, plus the present economic hardship of the working class, is presenting a challenge which it cannot overlook to a working class not accustomed to refusing a fight which is forced upon it.

And Britain? The drastic increase in the cost of living of which the budget is only the latest step, is unquestionably goading into activity the too-long-non-politicals on the one hand and the too-long-acquiescent labourites on the other. Symbolical of a deep development are the Conference of 1,500 women, the majority ordinary rarely articulate mothers and housewives, which met in London on March 9th, and the Co-operative Conference on German rearmament addressed by Mr. Dalton. Yes—on every hand there is the rolling of the thunder which can smash all plans for war, reverse the present barbaric trends, and pave the way to peace. On the other side the forces of war are mighty, determined and still relatively confident. This is not the time for either an easy optimism or a facile pessimism. It is the time to fight. And the fight is a fight for life which can—and must—be won.



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# BURMA ON THE MARCH

JOHN STRUTHERS

WHEN the London *Observer* devoted its front page on January 20, 1952, to the news that Kuomintang troops were being poured into Burma, armed and transported with the assistance of the Americans, the vast majority of readers in this country realised for the first time the extent and importance of this invasion. Yet, for well over a year the presence of General Li Mi's 93rd Division was well known, although, apart from very occasional and incomplete references, a curtain of silence was drawn over the affair in the British Press. It is now possible, however, to give the fullest details available on this plot against the People's Republic of China and against the Union of Burma itself.

The area of operations of the KMT troops is the province of Kengtung in East Burma. The province, which is roughly triangular, is bounded on the West by the Salween river, on the East by the Yunnan-Burma frontier and in the South by the frontier line of Indo-China and Thailand. This whole area is now under complete KMT control.

The actual KMT base area is a quadrangle of 140 square miles with the southern side running along the Thai frontier. In the centre of this area is Monghsat where a war-time air strip is rapidly being developed into a serviceable aerodrome with a 2,500 yard run-way capable of taking large planes bringing arms, stores and men from Taiwan. Of the KMT troops in Burma now numbering nearly 15,000, some 4,000 are stationed at Monghsat. Development of the aerodrome will greatly facilitate reinforcement of the KMT troops by the United States as, until now, transport has been by plane from Taiwan to Bangkok and thence north by rail to the railhead at Chiang Mai. From there, stores and men are moved over the frontier to Monghsat along a track which is negotiable only by jeeps and mules.

The body which is organising the invasion of Burma goes under the name of the 'Committee for a Free Asia'. Its headquarters are in *San Francisco*, and it has branches in Bangkok and Saigon. Powerful United States political figures connected with the Chinese Lobby as well as KMT agents are believed to be the active organisers. Nevertheless, that the invasion of Burma is



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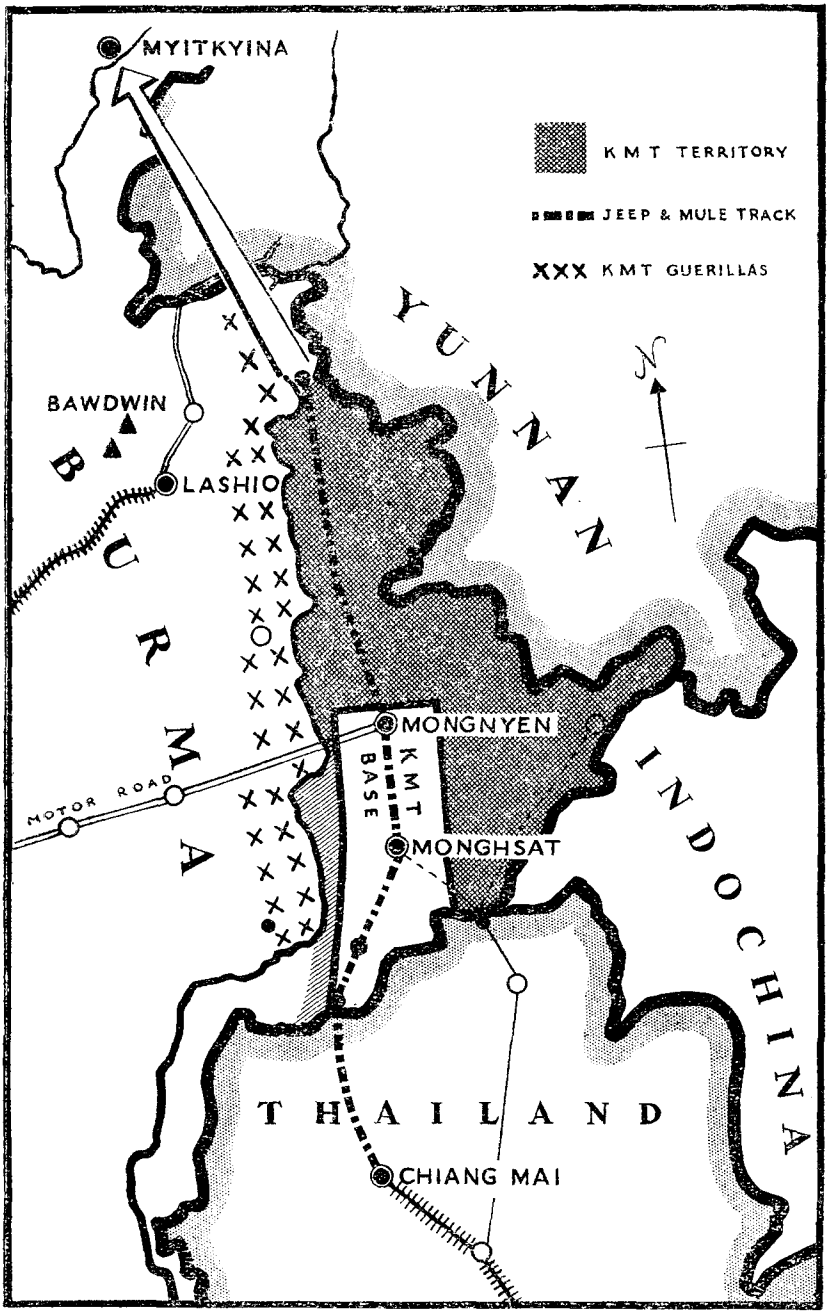




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being conducted with the active assistance and knowledge of the United States Government and its representatives in South East Asia is clear; and no one with any sense believes the contrary.

The disposal of the KMT troops is as follows: spread along the West bank of the Salween river, 4,000; on the Yunnan frontier about another 4,000; at Mongnyen, on the outermost fringe of the base area and due north of Monghsat, 3,000, while the remainder are organised in irregular mobile units at present engaged in probing operations designed to extend the area under KMT control, to pillage food and clothing and to collect ' taxes '.

In recent weeks the Chiang Kai-shek troops have been extending their area of operations and have pushed north-west over the Salween river to Myitkyina, capital of the Cachin State and 300 miles north of Mandalay. They are now also in control of Lashio, principal town on the war-time Burma road leading into China, and have been making attempts to take over the Bawdwin area where the British-owned Burma Corporation mines are situated. These mines produce lead and tungsten. Such a move, if the mines could be operated, would greatly swell the treasury of the KMT troops, which, apart from American subsidies, are dependent on the ' taxes ' they can extract from the reluctant population of Kengtung and on the proceeds of the very profitable opium smuggling trade which is entirely in the hands of the KMT high brass. Further moves to extend the area under KMT control are also going on, significantly enough in a south-westerly direction towards the Mawchi area in the Karen States where, before the war, 10 per cent of the world's wolfram supplies were mined.

The aim of the United States is:

(1) to establish in Burma a Western Front against People's China, supplementing the positions in the east represented by Taiwan, Japan and Korea;

(2) to build up a military force capable of intervening in Burma to retain the country under imperialist control, should the rapidly disintegrating AFPFL Government fail to hold the position. The above outline gives some idea of the serious threat which the KMT troops represent to People's China, to the Burmese people and to peace in Asia.

However, at the same time as this military build-up for aggression has been taking place, there has come into being in



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Burma a united political movement which is mobilising the people against imperialism and is changing the whole face of politics in the country. This movement is the recently-formed United Front embracing the left-Socialist Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party, the People's Peace Front led by Aung Than (brother of the late Prime Minister Aung San) and the nationalist Greater Burma Party.* It was this tripartite alliance which broke through the curtain of silence maintained by the international press on this American-sponsored invasion, the existence of which was common knowledge. The United Front is rapidly becoming the basis for a real People's Front movement and is giving a severe headache to the AFPFL Government by its strong championship of anti-imperialist policies and its demands for progressive internal measures. It was the force represented by this alliance which compelled U Mynt Thein, Burmese delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, to take a strong stand and to state on January 28 that 'any attempt by anyone to make Burma a base for aggression will be resisted'.

The formation of the United Front has thrown a spanner into the plans of the AFPFL Government which has been driven to refuse American aid as conditioned by the terms of the Mutual Security Act. What has increased the difficulties of the AFPFL Government in following out United States policy is the division in their own ranks caused by the expression given to the Burmese people's feelings by the tripartite alliance. Particularly on the question of KMT troops deep rifts have appeared in the governing groups. The army leaders, for example, supported by the influential Shan chiefs, want to fight the KMT invaders; while the rank and file of the army has long ago lost any enthusiasm it might have had for fighting the partisans in the Liberated Areas and is eager to turn against Chiang Kai-shek's men. In fact, the only group which is in favour of doing nothing to antagonise the Americans is a small band of corrupt politicians in Rangoon who dare not now come out openly and say so.

The initiative clearly belongs to the United Front which on February 24 at a mass rally held in Rangoon announced the

* The agreement between the three parties was reached after the BWPP had carried on a magnificent campaign to expose the commonly known plan of the AFPFL Government to smash the Party and drive the leaders underground. The failure of the Government was underlined by the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party when, in co-operation with the two other opposition parties, it held a mass rally in Rangoon on December 16, 1951 (by which date it was supposed to have been driven underground).



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formation of a volunteer corps to fight the KMT troops. This was followed by a declaration from the All-Burma Students' Federation that they would also join in the fight against the invaders.

Concurrently with all this activity in relation to foreign policy, the Burma Workers' and Peasants' Party has been gaining widespread support against the Emergency Laws of the Government and the persecutions of progressives and trade unionists being carried out under them. Broad-based Committees for the Defence of Democratic Rights have been set up in several provinces and have carried out novel and effective action. Mass 'People's Courts' have been organised at which the case against the Government is presented—sometimes by the persecuted person himself—and a verdict is rendered. The splendid victories won in a number of cases show that the AFPFL is very susceptible to this form of mass pressure and that a real people's movement can win victories even under the most difficult of circumstances. If we add to all this political ferment in the Government-controlled areas the unification of the White Flag, Red Flag, People's Volunteer Organisation and Karen National Army which is now practically sealed in the partisan regions, the growing isolation of the ruling AFPFL group becomes apparent.

While it is clear that the presence of U.S.-sponsored KMT troops in Burma represents a real threat to peace in Asia and to the Burmese people, the most significant feature in the situation is not the military fact but is the growing unity of the progressive forces of the country. It is this force which is compelling a still hesitant change of attitude on the part of the Government, is taking practical action against United States imperialism, is striking a blow for world peace and, in the process, is bringing the people into action and isolating the reactionaries. The Burmese people are on the march.

*The Brixton and Clapham Labour Monthly Discussion Group meets at 43, Elms Road, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4, on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.45 p.m. All interested readers will be welcome.*



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## Book Reviews

### THE MAKING OF A GREAT IDEA

*Theories of Surplus Value*, by Karl Marx. Selections, translated by G. A. Bonner and Emile Burns. (432 pp. Lawrence & Wishart, 25s.)

A Book was published recently which told the story of the making of a certain film, from its first conception in the mind of the producer to its final showing on the screen. Karl Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value* tells the story of the making of a great idea, from its early origins in the work of Sir William Petty and the French Physiocrats, through its development by Adam Smith and David Ricardo, to its final formulation by Marx himself in the pages of *Capital*.

Marx originally intended that *Capital* should consist of four volumes, of which the last was to be a history of economic thought. After his death he left a large collection of manuscript notes on this subject, which were eventually edited (not very satisfactorily) by Karl Kautsky, and published under the title *Theories of Surplus Value*. It had long been a reproach against Marxist scholarship in this country that no English translation of the *Theories* existed. The present volume of selections reproduces, in a lively and intelligent translation, the most important sections dealing with David Ricardo, Adam Smith and the pre-Smithian economists Its publication is a noteworthy event in the history of the British working-class movement.

Its appearance at the present time, when 'Keynesian' illusions are rife in the labour movement, is especially welcome. The economist who suffers more than any other from Marx's criticism in the *Theories* is Thomas Robert Malthus —the man whom Keynes extolled as 'the first of the Cambridge economists' and whose theory of effective demand he developed as the basis of his *General Theory*. The present volume, unfortunately, does not include the special sections on Malthus; the editors, with limited space at their disposal, decided to exclude Marx's direct comments on the 'vulgar' economists. But it does contain a great deal of material which shows precisely why Marx objected so strenuously to Malthus and those who thought like him. The clue is to be found on the very first page of the book, which Marx says, in relation to a statement by Petty, that 'what is at issue here is what causes the phenomena, not the phenomena themselves'. The task of political economy, Marx believed, was to disclose those 'intrinsic connections' between economic categories which lay behind and ultimately determined their 'phenomenal form'—i.e., their connections 'as they appear in competition' (p. 261). The theories of economists like Malthus, who concerned themselves only with the superficial appearances of things and failed to seek for their 'inner connections', were bound to be inadequate and apologetic. In particular, they were bound to give distorted accounts of the nature and origin of surplus value.

The 'Classical' economists—notably the Physiocrats, Smith and Ricardo—as distinct from the 'vulgar' economists who followed them, were definitely seeking for these 'inner connections'. The critical account of their work which Marx gives in the *Theories* shows



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why none of them ever fully succeeded in finding them.

The great merit of the Physiocrats, the first real school of political economists, was that they 'transferred the investigation into the origin of surplus value from the sphere of circulation into the sphere of direct production', and thereby laid the foundation for the analysis of capitalist production (p. 45). But to the Physiocrats, living in France in the middle of the eighteenth century, surplus value appeared in the first instance to take the form of land rent and land rent alone. Adam Smith, on the other hand, correctly saw industrial profit as the primary general form of surplus value (pp. 47-8), and made a serious attempt to explain its origin, in terms of the 'inner connections' between the relevant economic categories. But side by side with his analysis of the 'inner connections' Smith placed an analysis of the connections as they are 'manifested in the phenomena of competition' (p. 202). The result is that we find Smith making in one part of his work an extremely profound analysis of value and surplus value; and in another part an entirely superficial analysis, suggesting that value is determined by 'adding up' wages, rent and profit, and that profit arises through the capitalist simply 'adding' the normal percentage mark-up to his prime costs. Marx shows that in the circumstances of his time Smith was justified in adopting this approach since he had a two-fold task to perform; 'on the one hand, to attempt to penetrate to the inner physiology of bourgeois society: on the other, partly for the first time to describe the living forms in which this inner physiology manifests itself outwardly' (p. 202).

This advance, however, could only be made at the price of considerable confusion, which Ricardo did his best to clear up. Ricardo started with the determination of value by labour time, which Smith in the more profound part of his own work had recognised as the foundation for the understanding of 'the physiology of bourgeois society' and asked himself 'how far the rest of the categories which the science has developed and described . . . correspond to or conflict with this foundation' (p. 203). This approach was a great improvement on that of Smith, and the science could not have progressed very far without it. But if its 'scientific necessity' in the history of economics can be seen easily enough, so also can its 'scientific inadequacy' (pp. 201-2). In particular, it obliged Ricardo to assume in advance that a general rate of profit of a particular magnitude existed—which virtually cut him off from all possibility of explaining *why* this particular rate existed The only way to explain why the rate of profit is, say 10 per cent, instead of 1,000 per cent is to start with the labour-determined value of commodities and to analyse the formation of an average rate of profit in terms of the competitive redistribution among capitalists of the total pool of surplus value yielded by the labour force over the economy as a whole. There are many passages in Marx's critique of Ricardo in the *Theories* which throw considerable light upon the analysis of the formation of 'prices of production' in Volume 3 of *Capital*.

All this, of course, is only the bare bones of a fascinating story, which affords an illuminating commentary not only upon the work of the predecessors of Marx but also upon



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that of Marx himself. It is a story with many highlights—the section on productive and unproductive labour, for example; the essay on 'The General Character of the Physiocratic System'; and, perhaps the most important and interesting of them all, the section on crises, in which Marx (seventy years before Keynes) brilliantly exposes the falsity and superficiality of Say's Law. It is not always easy to read, partly because Marx is dealing with difficult problems, and partly because some of it is little more than notes jotted down for future elaboration. But it should definitely be read and studied by all those who realise that to improve their knowledge and understanding of Marxist political economy is to increase their effectiveness in the struggle for the liberation of mankind from oppression and war.

RONALD L. MEEK.

## "FIRE! FIRE!"

*Fetch the Engine*, by Frederick H. Radford. (192 pp. Fire Brigades Union, 6s. 6d.).

HERE is a history of a trade union which is well written, entertaining, and available to everyone at a very reasonable price. Firemen will read it, but it is important that it should also be widely read in the trade union and Labour movement. The reason for this is not because the F.B.U. is particularly large in membership or ancient in history. It was not founded until 1918 and the membership did not reach 4,000 for the first twenty years of its existence. Its present membership of 20,500 does not bring it within the most powerful class on the criterion of mere numbers. But what does give this history its particular importance is its story of how trade unionism established and maintained itself in a uniformed and disciplined service. Time and again it looked as though it might be overwhelmed. Before the Second World War the great majority of uniformed firemen outside London were unorganised and many of them were in 'police brigades' which were cut off from the F.B.U. Then when war came there was the overwhelming influx of unorganised A.F.S. men who might have been expected to swamp the regulars and their trade union. Again, with conscription for the Fire Service and its nationalisation by the Government, there were moves by the Home Office to introduce a company union modelled upon the Police Federation. All these dangers were surmounted with vigorous leadership. The A.F.S. were organised into the F.B.U. and the union gained its decisive victory when its place in the National Fire Service was recognised, so that 'for the first time the principle of Trade Unionism has been recognised in a uniformed disciplined and conscripted force'. It was merely an extension of this principle that secured complete trade union organisation and discipline within the column of the Overseas Contingent of firemen which took part in the invasion of Europe.

It is a remarkable story, and it comes to life in this book. Unfortunately the book went to press last September so that the recent struggle of the firemen to obtain wage increases is not included. This will make a stirring additional chapter in the future editions which will undoubtedly be called for. Advantage should then be taken to correct the careless proof-reading which is the only minor blemish on this first edition. GORDON SANDISON.



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## SHORTER NOTICES

*Justinian and His Age* by P. N. Ure. (262 pp. Penguin Books. *2s.*)

MOST of us know so little about the medieval history of Eastern Europe that any book on the subject will be welcome provided that it is tolerably accurate and free from that crude, ill-informed anti-Soviet propaganda which many 'objective' scholars are importing into their own 'scholarly' work nowadays. The late Professor Ure wrote this book, I believe, during the war years, 'when,' he writes (p. 13), 'people in West Europe are making a serious and honest attempt to understand a great people', i.e., the Slavs of the Balkan States and Russia. His method is to allow the writers of Justinian's reign (A.D. 527-65) to speak for themselves; and much of the book consists of translations and full paraphrases from them and from other contemporary documents. So that even if the book has no other virtues—which is not the case—it would at least enable the reader to form some idea of the extraordinary high degree of civilisation which south-eastern Europe and the Near East maintained at a time when Western Europe was still wallowing in unspeakable barbarism.

Of course, the book moves within narrow limits. There is no discussion of the cost of Justinian's 'splendour'. We have ample materials for picturing the ghastly conditions in which the slaves lived and the poorer freemen and even the skilled craftsmen. But Ure has no chapter on these, nor on the great revolt of Stotzas in which Byzantine troops and native Africans made common cause to overthrow their oppressors, nor on the class structure of Byzantium, nor on the methods of exploitation, nor on a dozen other topics of the kind. But within limits Ure does not consciously idealise Byzantine civilisation. He is not silent about the aggressive character of the wars, the suppression of free speech, the burning of books, and the burning of men and similar glories of the Christian Empire, which has been proudly claimed as the fountainhead of what they call the 'Western Tradition'. E. A. THOMPSON.

*The Last Optimist*, by Alvarez del Vayo (406 pp. Putnam, *18s.*).

ALVAREZ DEL VAYO, former Foreign Minister of the Spanish Republic and its spokesman at the League of Nations, in this book records his reminiscences from the days of his childhood to 1949. As student, journalist, diplomat and politician he has visited many countries, witnessed historic events and met some remarkable personalities. Experience, unfortunately, does not always bring wisdom. On the final page of his book, written towards the end of 1949, del Vayo says he does not think the United States administration 'will yield to the pressure of reactionary legislators who see in Franco the last European bulwark against Bolshevism'. This makes sorry reading now that the United States Government has concluded a military pact with Franco. We can only hope that del Vayo has the honesty and courage to draw the necessary conclusions and that in the future he will turn his attention from the propagation of pernicious illusions to work for the cause of peace and the unification of all Spaniards opposed to Franco.

Only a small section of *The Last Optimist* is directly concerned with the period of the Spanish War and that section is intended to supplement what del Vayo wrote in *Freedom's Battle*, published in 1940. R.M.



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*Disarmament*, by Professor J. D. Bernal, F.R.S. (24 pp. British Peace Committee. 6d.)

For those misled by the false propaganda of 'negotiation from strength' and 'rearmament for defence', this pamphlet should be useful. It exposes the fallacies and the grave risks of war in these policies and shows how only Disarmament can give concrete assurance of safety; can lift economic burdens; *can stop war*. The deep desire of the peoples of the world for peace is shown by the 500 million signatures to the Stockholm Appeal for the abolition of the atom bomb (with which too the pamphlet deals succinctly) and the more than 600 million signatures to the Appeal for a Five Power Peace Pact. The World Council of Peace, uniting and leading forward this tremendous force for Peace has adopted clear and practical proposals for Disarmament. This exposition of these proposals and of the overwhelming case for Disarmament will be an invaluable help to all who are working to lift the shadow of war.

B.M.B.

*The British Coal Industry*, by H. Townshend-Rose. (162 pp. George Allen & Unwin. *12s. 6d.*)

THIS book is not a critical study ('it would', says the author, 'be presumptuous of me, as an employee of the National Coal Board, to attempt to evaluate what has been achieved') but a simple description under usual headings ending with The Board's Employees, Marketing, The Finances of the Industry. The N.C.B. and its origin are set forth and modern techniques are dealt with. It is clearly printed.

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## FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

### ANTI-SOVIET WAR PLANS

What Chamberlain said in detail even more clearly indicates the dominant policy of the Government. He said, answering the question of why no immediate action was proposed:—

> A breach between us and Soviet Russia . . . *if taken suddenly* or before the world saw what was the provocation, what was the inevitability of it, and before the world was in a position to place the responsibility—*as the responsibility will lie whenever this comes about*—on the right shoulders . . . to act before we had given time for the evidence to become clear would have had a very disturbing effect upon the European situation.

This statement is the statement of a man solely concerned with the diplomatic preparation of a war. The coming war with the Soviet Union



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is assumed; the only problem is the correct preparation of 'war responsibility'. The statement bears an ominously similar ring in its actual phrasing to the statements of Baldwin and Churchill in 1925 defending the subsidy and Red Friday as preparation for May 1 ('if they were going to embark on a struggle of this kind, let them be quite sure that decisive public opinion was behind them', 'if such an issue should ever have to be brought to a head, public opinion would have to be educated into a state of preparedness to accept the consequences', etc.). In the same tone Snowden, who had already been quoted by Chamberlain with complete approval in his own support, echoed Chamberlain when he said:—

> Let him make another effort to try and settle the questions, and *if he failed, then he would have a much stronger case* than he had today to ask the House to break off relations.

The preparation of the 'case' for the future war on the Soviet Union as completely obsesses the language and expression of the Foreign Office today as the building up of the anti-Soviet coalition dominates its diplomatic actions.

The most conspicuous feature in the House of Commons debate on the Note to the Soviet Union was the fact that MacDonald, entrusted by the Labour Movement with the task of opposition to the Government's policy, not only came out in complete support of Chamberlain's policy and the Chamberlain Note, but endeavoured to underline his position of solidarity with the capitalist outlook by declaring that he would have sent a stronger Note. 'I am glad that the Foreign Secretary sent a Note to Russia. I think the Note was two years out of date. . . . If I had been in office a Note would have been sent a good long time before 1927 . . . I think it would have been stiffer in substance. We all agree with the proposition that no country can tolerate the interference of a foreign country in its own affairs.' Here is expressed the unity of the Second International with the policy of Chamberlain. The blind hatred of Bolshevism leads to a complete ignoring of the most elementary requirements of policy of the working-class movment. Once again is revealed the old obsession of appearing more anti-Bolshevik than the bourgeoisie themselves ('If I had been in office . . . It would have been stiffer,' etc.) which led to the fall of MacDonald in 1924, and his ruinous handling and gullibility over the Zinoviev forgery, when his anti-Bolshevism made him the easy prey of the experienced Foreign Office officials.

From *Notes of the Month*, by R. P. D., April, 1927

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tion the answers were: "A smashing article!" and "We don't want war with China!", nine of them commented.' And I would add, what splendid initiative by our friend; plainly there are many more like him in that area, since the circulation there has risen recently by about 25 per cent. Nothing is more enthralling, I find, than wrestling with circulation figures from different districts and discovering the reasons for the change. How comes this 10 per cent rise in the Midlands and why a nine per cent fall only a little to the East; cautious rise in Lancashire; steady recovery in Yorkshire after a seven per cent fall; astonishing progress in Middlesex and South Wales; the lack of any change in Scotland? I get the news in snatches. ('After we had discussed it, right away five more were sold in one trade union branch, six in two others'. Or: 'I took extras to the last trades council meeting; they all went'.) Still, the picture is clear: wherever readers have got together and planned, circulation has *risen* in the last six months. In one area a drop to 93 per cent of the September figure was thus converted into a rise to 111 per cent. All this springs from those who feel like the Yorkshireman, 13 years a reader, that it provides 'the finest political education available; when the history of these times is written, the part it plays in the fight for decency and human dignity will loom large'. Such appreciation inspires readers who make increasing use of the Specimen Copy scheme (see back cover) to introduce it to prospective readers. Hence new friends, like the Lancashire man who writes thanking us and the introducer, voicing his pleasure in 'a true Socialist publication'. We want no higher praise than that.

Once again I have no space for telling the many stories of loyalty and often of real sacrifice behind the lists of donations. The names of the steady regulars deserve to be printed in letters of gold. They, too, are making a path over the mountain. Despite rising prices and anxieties in the short month of February it is they who were mainly responsible for a total of

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